

One viewpoint on the political  
Character of Philhal

In view of the criticism sent in by our <sup>friends</sup> ~~allies~~ in Bihar (the old Philhal group), and perhaps shared by Shri Zaidi + ~~some others~~ friends, ~~it is necessary to consider~~ the editorial body of Philhal must seriously consider the political character of Philhal.

There is no doubt, whether we see it in terms of the editorial committee ~~and~~ (Dilip, Shukha & to a lesser extent Pandey & Indu) or the distribution network that has so far emerged, that one group sharing a specific political perspective today controls the initiative in bringing out Philhal. I say this not as a criticism but merely <sup>as</sup> a description of the status of Philhal. And it is important to ~~recognise~~ <sup>recognise</sup> the control of Philhal ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> this group because the political character of Philhal is & will be increasingly determined by ~~this group~~ the politics of this group.

(let us call it the new Philhal group)

This group <sup>1</sup> analyses the existing communist parties & their trade unions as non-revolutionary in the sense that they are <sup>(a)</sup> controlled by 'representatives' of the workers rather than <sup>the</sup> workers themselves & (b) that these parties & unions attempt to 'manage' the workers movement <sup>in carrying on the programme of capital</sup> rather than participate with the working class in its confrontation against capital.

As a description of existing states of the working class movement ~~that~~ personally I find this accurate. Whether the present historical situation permits any other alternative is another matter which I will ~~not~~ not go into here. The point I want to make here is that this <sup>new Philhal group</sup> ~~group~~ itself is not fundamentally different.



\* And I would like to mention here in passing that while this group must be applauded for the ~~humility~~ ~~with~~ ~~as~~ humbleness with which it perceives its own role ~~in~~ <sup>groups</sup> in the workers movement; that humility is not exclusive to it. There are others ~~also~~ <sup>among</sup> the 'representatives' also who have such humility. And certainly ~~that~~ that humility does not give the new Philistines the excuse to adopt a 'holier & ~~more~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ <sup>more</sup> wise than thou' attitude towards other sections of the left.



\* And I am now referring to not only those directly connected with bringing out the paper but also their friends in and outside Delhi.

from the other 'left' groups which it characterises along with the Communist parties as being non-revolutionary. If ~~Phil~~ is first of all largely a group of middle class intellectuals, students & professionals. It is <sup>hierarchical</sup> ~~organised~~, like the other groups, in the form of idealized 'cells', advanced cadres and <sup>which are not unlike secret cells</sup> ~~its~~ advanced cadres - the last two categories being organised into study circles. Its method of functioning is secret and underground like that of any Leninist 'party' in its embryonic phase. This group also sees its role as that of interpreting <sup>& educating</sup> for the working class <sup>on</sup> its historic role - as underlined by this group. In that sense while the <sup>new Phil</sup> group is distinct from any other 'left' political groups in its ~~political perspective~~ <sup>proposed political perspective</sup> it must be characterised along with the other groups & parties as ~~one of the~~ <sup>one of the</sup> 'representatives' of the working class, rather than as a group emerging from the working class itself.

~~Therefore while the group is certainly non-sectarian~~

Therefore while the group is certainly non-sectarian in its attitude towards the working class as a ~~class~~ 'class', irrespective of the affiliation of <sup>different</sup> segments of the class to one or another left group, the <sup>new Phil</sup> group itself cannot be seen as anything but one among the several Leninist ~~existing~~ <sup>existing</sup> groups & parties of 'representatives' of the working class. \* And to the extent that this group would wish to carry Phil in the direction of its own perspective I think this is a sectarian departure from the original intention (~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> cyclostyled appeal) of making Phil a non-sectarian organ for all sections of the left. I would emphasise here that non-sectarianism as an attitude towards the left cannot be a merely passive attitude of 'anybody's all'



to write' but an active attitude of continually working ~~the~~ the other groups to ~~read to~~ write in Philhal, criticize & use it for their purposes as well.

Let me clarify that I personally ~~am not~~ ~~do not~~ think that making Philhal a workers' paper as apposed to a non-sectarian organ of the left is worthwhile. For reasons Dilip has repeatedly emphasised I think that this is a very worthwhile effort. But the fact remains that this is a departure from the original intention of Philhal - as expressed in <sup>my last</sup> ~~the~~ appeal - on the basis of which we have tried to win support from other sections of the left & especially, the basis on which we approached the old Philhal group of ~~share for~~ ~~sharing~~ ~~up the name~~ using the name 'Philhal' & the good will that goes with it. ~~To carry on in this new direction~~ To ~~again~~ try to live over this departure or ~~push~~ bulldoze it through without explicitly confronting it among ourselves, and without making a clear clarification to the original Philhal ~~group~~ group & other friends among the left, would be dishonest. It would be tantamount to the same kind of secret flattery & <sup>mutual</sup> backstabbing that is so characteristic of the <sup>other</sup> left 'groups' & parties today. I think that in sincerity to its own departure from the traditional style of functioning of these groups, the new Philhal group should unambiguously announce its new perspective for Philhal, perhaps even discuss it & publish criticisms <sup>of it</sup> for a few issues in Philhal and certainly <sup>it</sup> seek clarification from the old Philhal group about whether they would still be <sup>use of</sup> willing to allow <sup>the</sup> name on this new basis. <sup>ment</sup>



This is not written for publication.  
This is a note for consideration by the editorial committee of Philhal. You may or may not choose to publish it. If you do publish, please edit & publish anonymously. In any case I wish to clarify that it has been hurriedly written for the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting as I will not be there. Some points have been overstressed or put too strongly.

Some others are tentative. Friends are requested to see the note in the spirit in which it is written i.e. not aggressively with <sup>the</sup> purpose of picking holes (any learned & careful debater can do that with a less learned one even if the latter is right) but sympathetically with the purpose of seeing whether there may be a point in what I am saying.

Can we draft a short announcement of Philhal for publication in Mainstream, EPW, Frontier, Zameer, Curtain, Bikhram & other politically oriented left papers in reg. lang. & english. Some of them have already said they would be willing to publish it.